

TERMS.

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WHY DO WE LOVE?

I often think each uttering form

That hangs along in life's decline,

Once bore a heart as young, as warm,

As full of life and thoughts as mine.

And each has had his dream of joy,

His own unequalled, pure romance;

Commencing when the blushing year

First thrills at woman's lovely glance.

And each could tell his tale of youth—

Would think its scenes of love evince

More passion, more unworldly truth,

Than any tale, before or since.

Yes, they could tell of tender lays,

At midnight pined, in classic shades—

Of days more bright than modern days—

Of maidens fairer than modern maids.

Of whispers in a willing ear,

Of kisses on a blushing cheek—

Each kiss, each whisper, far too dear

For modern lips to give or speak.

Of prospects, too, untimely crossed,

Of passions slighted or betrayed—

Of kindred spirits early lost,

And buds that blossomed but to fade.

Of beaming eyes and tresses gray,

Elastic form and noble brow,

And charms—that all have passed away,

And left them—what we see them now?

And is it thus—a human love

So very light and frail a thing!

And must Youth's brightest visions move

Forever on Time's restless wing!

Must all the eyes that still are bright,

And all the lips that talk of bliss,

And all the forms so fair to sight,

Hereafter only come to this!

Then what are Love's best visions worth,

If we at length must lose them thus?

If all we value most on earth,

Ere long must fade away from us!

If that one being whom we take

From all the world, and still recur

To all we said, and for her sake

Feel far from joy, when far from her;

If that one form which we adore,

From youth to age, in bliss or pain,

Soon withers and is seen no more—

Why do we love—if love be vain!

From the *London Forget Me Not* for 1841.

The Sister's Sacrifice.

BY MISS M. A. BROWNE.

The cloudless sun of an Italian sky never shone down upon a fairer dwelling place than that of Pietro Monti. It was situated on the slope of one of those hills that form a semicircle behind the ancient city of Genoa, and the view which it commanded was singularly beautiful. Below it lay the city stretching, far along the edge of the bay or gulf, whose deep blue bosom was so free from wave or ripple, that the smallest rope and the slender spar of the large vessels at anchor were imaged as in a mirror; while the smaller craft, gliding about like the sea birds on the wing, were the only moving objects in the picture. Far up the slope of the hills extended a portion of the town, consisting of churches, convents, palaces, and the better sort of houses, intermingled with fertile gardens, and just so far apart from the sea as to obtain all the advantages of retirement, without the unpleasantness of entire loneliness, stood the mansion, for years the residence of Pietro Monti.

This personage had long been considered one of the wealthiest merchants of Genoa, but latterly his prosperity had been on the decline. Heavy losses had befallen him, and, though still possessing a sufficiency for all his wants, the change in his fortune preyed severely upon his health and spirits. At the time when my narrative commences, he had entirely withdrawn from business for some months, and had been leading a life of complete seclusion. His strength had long been declining, and, while his house was looking its loveliest, surrounded by all the freshness and beauty of a most luxuriant spring, within it there were gloom and sorrow, for Pietro Monti lay on his death-bed.

Many years before, he had married an English lady, one of a noble but poor Roman Catholic family, who had been settled for some time in Genoa. By her he had two children, a son and a daughter, the latter a mere infant when her mother died. The little Bianca, therefore, was placed under the care of a relative, who was superior to a convent some miles off. She was but just sixteen, when she was hastily summoned to assist her brother in the task of attendance on their dying father.

Very beautiful was Bianca Monti, and her secluded life and utter ignorance of the world had invested her with an air of extreme simplicity and innocence, which made her seem even younger than she was. She resembled her mother in person, possessing fair hair, the sweetest of sweet blue eyes, and an exquisitely delicate complexion. Her figure, though still childish, was extremely graceful, and, as she glided lightly through the long corridors of the mansion, or flitted noiselessly round the sick man's bed, bending beside it ever and anon to perform some act of devotion, she appeared far more like what one would imagine of an angel, than a mere inhabitant of this grosser world.

Pietro Monti died, but ere he departed he earnestly requested that his youthful daughter would return to the convent that had sheltered her childhood, and, if she felt no repugnance to a continuance there, devote herself at once to a life of religion. And there was no rebellious heaving in her quiet heart, no regretful tear in her calm blue eye, as bending meekly to receive his last blessing, she answered, "So, dear father, I have ever intended to do."

BOON'S LICK TIMES.

"ERROR CEASES TO BE DANGEROUS, WHEN REASON IS LEFT FREE TO COMBAT IT."—JEFFERSON.

Vol. 1.

PAYETTE, MISSOURI, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1840.

No. 39.

But weeks passed away, and the sweet face and gentle voice of Bianca, still gladdened the fair home which now had passed into the possession of her brother. Giovanni was six years older than his sister. He had spent his boyhood wildly and extravagantly; for his mother's early death, his sister's absence, and his father's unskillful labors, had conspired to make home a gloomy place, just at the period when it should have put forth its sweetest attraction, if it was to have any chance with one like himself, in comparison with the specious allurements of worldly pleasure. Thus he had been led to mingle in scenes less innocent, and to associate with companions less profitable than home, under other circumstances, might have afforded him, and a reckless expenditure was the natural consequence of such a mode of life as his.

At the time of his father's death, his debts were very heavy—the whole of the ready money he could command was insufficient to liquidate them—and he felt that, if he ever hoped to retrieve his fortunes, a much less expensive course must be adopted. He was already weary of the road of dissipation he had been pursuing, and a domestic life, if graced by the presence and companionship of so sweet a creature as Bianca, appeared to his ardent imagination delightful, even from the very force of contrast. He strenuously opposed his sister's return to her convent, at least for the present; he represented in the most glowing terms the good effects which her society might produce upon him, and soon won her consent to remain with him as long as she was permitted to do so.

In a retirement scarcely less complete than that of the cloister, Bianca Monti continued to reside with her brother, and with him she would have been contented to dwell for ever, had not a letter arrived from her abbe, urging her to decide at once upon her future manner of life. Giovanni was urgent in his entreaties that she should remain with him. He desired that she could not survive if she went from him—that the view which was opening on him of a purer and happier existence than he had ever before known would be banished again if she forsook him now—and at length he obtained a promise that she would not leave him until the expiration of a year from their father's death. He explained to her all his difficulties and his plans for extricating himself from them, and was astonished to find the clear and understanding view which her unworldly mind took of every statement submitted to her. Young and simple as she was, she possessed great natural talents, and her exceeding candor always helped her to come straight to the truth at once, for she had no false shame, no want of moral courage, to hold her back from it. "It seems that you have been imprudent, Giovanni, and that you now must be poor for a time. Well, let us be poor, our poverty, after all, is but comparative. We have a home to shelter us; we can still provide wholesome food and decent raiment; few attendants can serve us; and with our books, our beautiful garden, and our trust in God, what do we want more?"

Six months sped away like a fairy dream. Giovanni scarcely ever left home, and was generally by the side of his lovely sister, sharing in her pursuits, and directing her attention with his own, to others which he felt he had too long neglected. He was not more surprised at her quickness in comprehending what he could teach her, than she was at finding that there was so very much to be learned and things relating to a world which she had always been taught to look upon as a scene of trial, temptation, and danger could be so full of interest for her. The brother and sister were mutually improving each other. Giovanni possessed much quickness, a good share of information, and some literary taste; and he was daily leading his sister into enchanted regions of knowledge and imagination, of whose existence she had no previous conception. She meanwhile was extending farther and farther over his wild and wayward nature the influence of her own pure and gentle spirit; and while in her simplicity she considered his mind as the treasury of all worldly learning, he, in the fervency of his fancy, was disposed to regard her as his guardian angel.

I must have your likeness, my own sweet sister; I cannot bear the thought that you should leave me, and nothing remain with me except your precious memory. I urge it now, because here is a fair opportunity of having it well executed. I know that you would not like to visit a studio for the purpose, nor should I wish to bring any townsman hither to make impertinent observations on our present circumstances; but this English painter, whose name is in every one's mouth—my, oh objection, sweetest!—you know we are half English ourselves; in fact, pardon me, I have already engaged him for your portrait, and he will be here to-morrow.

Three weeks before Giovanni made this proposition, Godfrey Western, the English artist in question, had caught one glimpse of Bianca Monti, and ever since had been longing for another. He had seen her as she returned from church, the only place at which she ever appeared in public, and had tried to obtain her name from the attendant who followed her at a little distance. But the man could not, or would not, understand the doubtful Italian in which he was addressed, indeed the Genoese dialect is so different from what we reckon pure Italian, that, had Western been ever so accomplished a scholar, it would have been difficult to make himself understood. What, therefore, was his delight when he found that the subject of his pencil was to be the same lovely face which had haunted his dreams and thoughts ever since he had first seen it!

My limits will not permit me to detail all the gradations of feeling which made Bianca Monti less anxious to return to her old associates, and finally inspired her with a positive dislike to the idea of leaving the veil. The painter was longer in completing her portrait than any other that he had ever undertaken, and yet Bianca never found the many long sittings he required tedious or disagreeable. But she did not long remain unconscious that she was under some unwelcome influence, and that a new feeling was springing up in her heart, though she did not understand its nature. She had heard of love—that it was a very dangerous and terrible passion, but that she could never experience it herself was an idea that had

never crossed her mind. She was full of warm affections she had loved her father with all the fanciful fervor of one who knew little or nothing of his real temper, and invested the paternal character with all that is high and holy. She loved the abbess, the nuns, every one who was connected with her recollection of her childhood—the old grey-headed gardener, the very trees and flowers of the convent garden, came in for a share of her regard. She cherished the memory of her lost mother with the same kind of tender reverence that she had been taught to feel for the saints in glory. Her love of Giovanni was a newer and more real feeling than these; it was a blending of gratitude for all the enjoyment he led her to find, in paths hitherto unknown to her, with that cherishing love which glows warmly in the heart of a woman towards any one to whom she feels she is of use.

But before Godfrey Western had come and gone half a dozen times between his own residence and her home, poor Bianca was strangely troubled, as in all her life she had never been before. Sleeping or waking, his eyes, his smile, his voice, syllabled into his incorrect but most musical Italian, were present with her. Once he left a small volume of English poetry behind, and Bianca took it to her own chamber, and turning over every leaf, traced the unknown words with strange curiosity, and feeling as if she would give the world to be able to penetrate their meaning. But before his next visit she had taken it back to the very place whence she had removed it, blushing and trembling as she did so, lest any one should observe her, and seated herself a little way off gazing on it as if 't were a treasure from which she was loth to part, and in whose neighborhood it was a delight to linger. She scarcely ever named Western to her brother, but if Giovanni spoke of him, her heart beat quickly, and her eyes involuntarily sunk below her. Yet she knew not that this was indeed love, and wondered more and more what was the matter with her. It was reserved for Godfrey himself to tell her.

The picture was nearly finished when Giovanni let home one day, on the plea of particular business, and Bianca was left alone to receive the usual visit from Western. By this time she had learned to feel the full meaning of every word he uttered, and to believe that he was as wise and as kind as Giovanni, though they were very, very different from each other. He came, and the tone in which he expressed his surprise at finding her by herself thrilled her heart—there was so much of delight mingled with his astonishment. Then, sighing as he withdrew his eye from the fair face, where he had suffered them to rest a moment in fond admiration, he arranged his colors, and resumed his task.

The language of true love is universal, no matter whether its vehicle be English, French, German, or "choise Italian; it is self-interpreting, and cannot be misunderstood. So it was that in less than an hour Godfrey Western and Bianca Monti perfectly understood that each was dearer to the other than all the world besides, and the gentle girl's head rested on his shoulder as confidently and fondly as if they had been formally betrothed for a twelve month.

Godfrey's greatest difficulty was to make his lovely Bianca comprehend that there were weighty reasons why this unusual avowal of their love must be kept secret for the present. She did not doubt for a moment that Western truly loved her, and would soon remove the seal of secrecy; but she grieved meanwhile that she might not tell Giovanni how very happy she felt.

Godfrey Western was not altogether what is termed to be. He was really the second son of a wealthy English baronet, but an unfortunate misunderstanding with his elder brother, who was the favorite of his father, had caused him to leave home in disgust. He had considerable talent for painting, and was now travelling through Italy in the disguise of a poor artist, partly for the sake of improvement, and partly the romance of his disposition. Of course, he was known in Genoa in his assumed character only, and having formed somewhat exaggerated notions of Italian pride and jealousy, he feared that, if his attachment to Bianca were divulged in the first instance, his account of himself would obtain little credit from her brother, and the stiletto might be quicker than the arrival of his letters from England. Indeed, on the whole, he thought it best to return thither immediately, and, providing himself proofs of his rank and station, visit Genoa again, and claim his beautiful bride. This he solemnly promised to do, as he kissed again and again the cheek and the lips of Bianca, and besought her to believe in his unchanging affection.

Once more and only once, the lovers met before Godfrey left Genoa; and in after hours the fair brow of Bianca often burnt with maiden shame when she remembered that their parting interview was a stolen one, and that, with all the energy which she marvelled to think upon, she had vowed to be his, as she clung closer and closer to his bosom. She longed to tell Giovanni of her happiness, and of her resolve to return to the convent no more. She broke no vow by changing her resolution; she had merely quietly acquiesced in her father's wish expressed in his last moments, at a time when his inclinations needed no promise to be a restraint on them; but now that her views of life were altogether different, she felt that to pursue her original intention would be a cruel injustice both to herself and to Western.

She felt sufficiently lonely and sad during the few days immediately following the painter's departure, but the classic spirit of youth is raised as easily as it is depressed, her mind soon regained much of its tranquillity, and her manner its usual cheerfulness. Nay, her color was richer, her eye brighter, her step more airy, than they had ever been, and Giovanni saw and wondered at the change, while he did not seek very deeply into its cause. Indeed his mind was fully occupied with other matters, which every day were acquiring more and more influence over him.

On the very day on which Western had found opportunity to reveal to Bianca the history of the feelings with which she had inspired him, Giovanni had formed an acquaintance with one who was destined to exercise a mighty power over her fortunes, and eventually on those of his sister. Some weeks before, he had placed some valuable jewels in the hands of one of his principal creditors, with instructions to offer them for sale when opportunity served, but not to dispose of them finally without further application to himself. In consequence of this, a message was brought him that a jewel-merchant of Florence, Alonzo Vornio, by name, was desirous of becoming the purchaser, and now waited to confer

with the owner of the property at the house where it was deposited.

The jewel merchant was a remarkable looking man; Giovanni almost forgot the business he had come about as he looked upon him. He seemed to be between fifty and sixty years old; his stature could not be called tall, but his frame was sinewy, and indicated considerable strength. His features were rather small and well shaped, lit up by a pair of the most extraordinary eyes that Giovanni had ever beheld. They were large, dark and intelligent—years had failed to abate their radiance, or render their expression less striking. Age had wrinkled the jewel merchant's brow, and grizzled his hair, once black as the raven's wing, but it seemed to have no power over that intensely bright eye, which in the language of Byron, "was in itself a soul." It seemed as if the clear comprehensive glance of Signor Alonzo could pierce at once into the very heart of those he gazed upon and defy their wildest efforts to keep secret from him even a thought. The stranger's manner was likewise singular. It was courteous in the extreme, yet it ever gave the idea that its smoothness was assumed, that there was something of *falsotto* in its sweetness and in the bland tones into which a very deep and powerful voice was habitually moulded. The most indifferent observer must have felt a conviction that there was strength and harshness too beneath this polished exterior, and that command was more the natural language of that voice than entreaty. He addressed Giovanni as an equal, but evidently accounted the tradesman in whose warehouse they stood as very much his inferior. He purchased the jewels, and paid for them at once, without asking for any statement in the price demanded, and, after some conversation on transactions to which the subject naturally led, he invited Giovanni to accompany him to his residence, where he said he had some tolerable jewels, which he should be happy to show him.

The temporary dwelling of the jewel merchant was a large house, which had remained uninhabited for many years. It stood in a busy part of the city, surrounded by a court with high walls, and a neglected garden. Warehouses, shops, and a flourishing market had risen near it; but though the agent left in charge of it was repeatedly applied to by persons wishing to purchase the site for the purpose of turning it to some profitable use, the answer always was that the owner had no intention of parting with it. But the jewel merchant had arrived provided with a letter to this agent, requesting that the keys should be delivered to Signor Alonzo Vornio, and that he should be allowed to occupy it while his business obliged him to remain in Genoa.

Giovanni was not waiting in bravery, nor was he naturally of a superstitious temper; but as they entered the building, a sensation akin to apprehension stole over his mind. He observed that, before leaving the court-yard which opened into the street, his companion carefully locked and barred the gate, and that as soon as they were within the house he took a similar precaution with respect to the door. The only light that penetrated into the hall in which they stood was the twilight that struggled faintly through the painted glass of a small window on the stair case. All within was dark and silent, and the clang of the door as it closed seemed to find an echo in every room and gallery of the empty mansion. A moment sufficed to reassure Giovanni, and to convince him that his vague alarm was groundless. He had nothing about him which could excite the cupidity of any one, for his jewels were already in the stranger's possession, and their purchase money remained with the creditor for whose benefit they had been sold. He resolved the conduct of his host into eccentricity, that potent name, under whose sanction so many follies have been admired, and so in much voice exclaim:

"He followed his new acquaintance, therefore, with more of curiosity than anxiety, and after traversing a long flight of stairs and a wide corridor, they entered an apartment whose dimensions could not be easily ascertained, for the fire that had burnt on the hearth was reduced to a few half extinguished embers. A thick wax candle, however, was immediately lighted, and placed in a silver candelstick of rare workmanship, which certainly bore the air of one of those usually employed in the worship of the Roman Catholic Church. Giovanni then saw that the chamber was of moderate size, the walls covered with tapestry, faded and fast dropping to decay, and the furniture, some very old, and some of humble materials and more modern date, had evidently been hastily gathered together to fit up the room as a temporary lodging for the stranger. He politely requested Giovanni to be seated, and, drawing from a recess a small ebony cabinet, intimated that it contained the jewels of which they had spoken.

They were indeed worth inspection. Drawer after drawer was opened, and each seemed to surpass the last in the splendor and value of its contents. Diamonds, rubies, amethysts, pearls, emeralds, topazes, sapphires, and many others less commonly known, were there in profusion; some few rough as from the mine, some cut and polished, but the greater portion set in every imaginable variety of form and style, and the eyes of the jewel-merchant flashed like his own gems, as he spread them before the astonished youth, and despatched on their merits.

"These rubies, Signor—ah, it was a fair price that we were last, but death shows no respect to the fairest; there was an extravagant sum in the case, too, and, lo! the rubies are here. And this chain of diamonds, how it flashed and sparkled in the dark light where it was destined to shine but once; these pearls and those emeralds have histories, too, but it is all gone and past now. These things are best forgotten—best forgotten!" said Alonzo, as he prepared to re-arrange the gems in the drawers, previously to closing the cabinet.

"But, Signor, pardon me, there is one I saw, which he surely did not examine—that to your left hand! may I ask to see what it contains?"

For a moment the eye of the jewel-merchant glared upon his guest with an expression that was absolutely ferocious, but it was immediately withdrawn, and there was no roughness in his tone as he replied, "It certainly holds some jewels, to me of considerable value; some time, perhaps, you may behold them, but not now—not now." He closed and locked the cabinet at once, and Giovanni's politeness would not permit him to urge the subject further.

The stranger made no further allusion to it, but assuming an air of gaiety, produced some excellent wine, of which he pressed Giovanni to partake. When the young man rose to take his leave, he begged him to repeat his visit, observing that he led a solitary life, but felt so true an interest in Giovanni, that he should be pained to think their first meeting should prove their last. The young

and warm-hearted are ever most open to the flattery that comes from one other than themselves, especially when it takes the guise of an interest for their welfare, and Giovanni promised to avail himself of the invitation on an early day. It must likewise be owned that he felt some excitement respecting the drawer which he had not yet been permitted to examine. Let no one say that curiosity is exclusively a feminine weakness.

A few weeks passed, and Giovanni and the jewel merchant were almost constant companions. They met every day, and, though Giovanni was most frequently the guest of the stranger, Alonzo's visits to the house of the Monti's were neither few nor far between. At any other time, Bianca would have been annoyed at the intrusion of a visitor, and at the frequent absence of Giovanni; but she gave little attention to what was passing around her. Her mind was pre-occupied with thoughts of Western, which were beginning to be mingled with no little anxiety at not hearing from him. Her chief solace was to sit alone in her chamber, or wander in the solitary walks of their extensive garden, recalling every look and tone of Western to her memory, and gathering comfort from the belief that words so fond and looks so eloquent, could not proceed from any source but true and constant affection. Both Giovanni, and the jewel-merchant were skillful chess-players, and hours were devoted to that noble game; but no long time had elapsed before dice were occasionally substituted, merely, as Alonzo observed, for the sake of variety. The stakes hazarded were at first small, but gradually increased in value, until Giovanni had lost some which he could ill afford to part with in his present circumstances. Still he played, in the vain hope that he should retrieve his ill-fortune, winning back trifling sums occasionally, but steadily losing on the whole.

When the madness of gambling has once fairly gained possession of a man, nothing can extinguish it while he has any thing left whereby he can prolong his pernicious excitement. The character of Giovanni's feelings towards the jewel-merchant had not changed; he had learned to regard him as almost an enemy, who a little while before had been his most intimate friend; but still he was an enemy with whom it would be dangerous to quarrel, because the victim saw no possible means of averting utter ruin, except the chance of winning back at least a portion of what he had so foolishly lost. With it he credited that the infatuated youth not only staked and lost every movable article of any value which he possessed, but had nearly set the very house which sheltered him against a large sum in money and was again a loser!

It was in his home that Giovanni perpetrated this act of folly, and no sooner was that final destruction of his hopes accomplished, than the luckless gambler arose without speaking a word, and left the room. Whatever his purpose might be, he was not permitted to execute it; for ere he reached the staircase, a hand was laid on his shoulder, and, "Where are you going, my young friend?" inquired the jewel-merchant, in his usual tone, "you are naturally disturbed at your loss, and no wonder; but take courage, I am no hard creditor, and moreover, you have a jewel in your possession, to obtain which I will willingly give you the largest sum which I staked just now, and forego my last winning to boot."

"You save, old man," said Giovanni, "Success has turned your brain, as ill-fortune will mine—I have neither gold nor jewel left—I am stripped of all I possessed—am a beggar, and an outcast from the house, and 'tis you who have made me so."

"You are excited just now," said Alonzo quietly, "and of course so things in their worst light; but come back with me, and I will make plain to you the middle I put forth just now."

He led the bewildered Giovanni back to the apartment they had just quitted, and, placing him on a seat, thus continued: "Yes, you have a gem to which the fairest diamonds the ever graced the crown of an Emperor is dim and worthless. Its beauty is perfect, its value cannot be counted; and better than all, it lives, breathes—there is a glorious soul with it—Ah, you start; you have my meaning now! I speak of your beautiful sister."

"Bianca!" exclaimed Giovanni, and he pronounced the name in such a tone of piercing anguish, that even the hard heart of the stranger thrilled when he heard it.

"Yes, Bianca!" he continued after a momentary pause; "and more, I tell you that you cannot avert it by any opposition, you may offer—it is written there; and he lastly arose, and flinging wide the curtain, pointed to the starry heavens, now bedecked in all the splendor of an Italian midnight. His form seemed to dilate, and his eyes to flash with superlunary radiance as he fixed them on the skies.

A strange awe crept over Giovanni. I have said that he was not much tainted with superstition; but, in the excited state of his feelings, he was peculiarly susceptible to its influence, aided as it was by the circumstances of the scene and hour. He sat speechless as one subject to the operation of a spell, while Alonzo proceeded:—"Destiny hath at last accomplished its work; the brow for which these rare brilliants were intended is found at length, and mine is the hand that must place them there." He drew from his bosom a small case or casket, and opening it, displayed a diamond tiara composed of but few stones, but those of such extraordinary size and splendor, that, miserable as Giovanni was, he could not suppress an exclamation of astonishment.

"There," said Alonzo, "were the treasures that I would not let you gaze upon before; now I burn to present them to your lovely sister. Long have they been reserved for my bride, and that must be done before the moon shall again have waxed and waned."

"Never said Giovanni sternly. 'You have stripped me of the little that remained to me of my inheritance, of the shelter of my house, of the peace I was regaining within its calm sanctuary, but Bianca, my own bright guardian angel, of her you shall not deprive me. We are beggars, but we will go forth as such together!'"

"You cannot conquer destiny," said the jewel merchant calmly. Meanwhile Bianca was becoming the prey of dark and anxious thoughts. The extreme time was past which Godfrey Western had fixed as the limit of his return, yet he came not. She grew restless and wretched, and, with the sympathy that exists between unhappy minds, she soon discovered that from some unavowed cause, Giovanni was as anxious as herself. The truth was that, while he still openly rejected the jewel merchant's advances respecting Bianca, his resolutions were secretly giving way under the necessities of the case. The alternative, that seemed at first too dreadful to be accepted on any terms, gradually grew familiar to his mind, and he was silently reconciling himself to a sacrifice, which after all, seemed to promise a better fate, even to Bianca, than utter, abject poverty. Surely even a marriage such as was proposed, with all its disparities, could scarcely include a more cheerless and lonely life than his sister's would have been if immured in a convent. Signor Alonzo must certainly be rich, and Bianca would be shielded from want, at least, by securing a protector in him. He was much older than herself, but then he could be when he pleased a most delightful companion, and for a young girl to marry a man considerably her senior was a matter of every day occurrence.

Still he shrunk from the task of communicating to the intended victim his altered fortunes, and the offer of Alonzo, until, one day, being more warmly urged on the subject than usual, he revealed to Bianca his wretchedness and the cause. Speechless

with terror and grief, poor Bianca listened to the fatal tidings, that seemed to crush her very heart; but, as soon as she could collect herself sufficiently to comprehend the whole dreadful truth, she fell on her knees, and confessed her secret betrothment to the English painter, her solemn conviction of the truth of his statements respecting his rank, and her certainty that a few days more would bring him to Genoa.

Giovanni was confounded at the barrier to his hopes, thus suddenly discovered, but he seemed utterly to disbelieve Western's promises and representations. He believed him to be an adventurer who had imposed on Bianca's simplicity, and concluded that having sufficiently amused himself with her artless affection, he had quitted Genoa to return no more. He did not tell her all this, but, by urgent entreaties, and likely pictures of the certain legacy that awaited them if she refused compliance with Alonzo's terms, he at length prevailed on Bianca to promise that, if no tidings of Western should arrive within fourteen days, she would see Alonzo, and permit him to urge his suit in person.

Her agonized anxiety during the ensuing fortnight may be imagined. She would sit for hours together at a window, which commanded a distant view of the public road, a thousand times fancying among the passers by the form, and even the features of her lover. She was repeatedly seized with sudden faintness and fits of trembling, which seemed to threaten the dissolution of soul and body, a fresher breath of wind in the room, or the leaves around the lattice, an approaching footstep, or a distant shout, was sufficient to produce these fearful effects. As the period of her respite drew to a close, she became calmer, but her's was the calmness of despair.

The last morning of the fortnight dawned—slowly each hour seemed to drag itself along, and yet how soon it was ended. She would scarcely believe that day, whose hours had seemed so long, was really passed away forever, and that it had brought with it a relief to her over-acted feelings. That night, as Bianca laid down her aching head, she felt that there were no terrors in her prayer, she should supplicate of God that it might never be raised again in life. But the night passed away, and she still lived, and she displayed no outward signs of emotion when Giovanni reluctantly reminded her that this day Signor Alonzo must be admitted to her presence.

Their interview was a scene for a painter. It took place in a small but richly furnished chamber, which Giovanni remembered that that devoted to his mother's use during her last long illness. He recollected how, when a child, six or seven years old, he was admitted at intervals to her presence, with many intimations from his nurse to "make no noise," and "not to touch anything." Bianca, simply dressed, in white, sat in the easy chair, which her mother had been accustomed to occupy when able to sit up, and pale and feeble as she now appeared, Giovanni saw in her a likeness to the invalid with whom that seat was always associated in his memory, which touched him to his heart's core. How well he remembered that dying mother bending down over the arm of that chair to kiss his forehead, as he knelt beside her, and looked wondrously up in her face, and softly, "My dear Bianca, choose to place herself there upon this trying occasion!"

But the current of this suffering feeling was checked as it arose, for Signor Alonzo Vornio entered, and the sparkling look of anxiety which Bianca cast upon her brother, when it went like a dagger to his heart, stored him up for any movement for her deliverance. He had gone too far to retreat; now all was at his own hands, and in the terrible agony of the moment, Giovanni believed he should almost be glad of his sister's resolution failed. But she did not withdraw the hand that her sister took in his, as she knelt on one knee before her, and when asked if she had decided to receive him as her future husband, the half-smothered whisper of assent that she forced from her parched and gasping lips was answered by the pressure of his own hand on that unresisting hand. Then her strength gave way with a short, pining shriek, she started to her feet, as if to fly, but fell senseless back into the arms of her brother.